



2010



Boise National Forest

Forest Highlights

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Boise National Forest

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White-headed woodpecker



Forest Supervisor Approves Amendment To Improve Management of Vegetation and Wildlife

On July 1, 2010, Boise National Forest Supervisor Cecilia R. Seesholtz amended the 2003 Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to include a Wildlife Conservation Strategy (WCS) for the forested biological community.

The goal of the WCS is to maintain or restore forested habitats across the Forest to provide for a diversity of terrestrial wildlife species consistent with all multiple-use objectives.

The initial emphasis is to restore habitats associated with species believed to be of greatest concern, such as low to mid-elevation ponderosa pine and the white-headed woodpecker.

The adoption of this strategy used a forest historical reference that provides the basis to achieve a more resilient, resistant and adaptable forested biological community and to provide reasonable assurance that native vegetative and wildlife diversity are sustained.

The WCS accompanies the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, which emphasizes fish passage improvement and riparian enhancement, and establishes specific standards for project implementation.



Ponderosa Pine tree stand

Fire Management Integrates Risk and Ecosystem Management

Implementing National and Forest fire management strategies was truly realized in 2010 with a mix of long duration fires and full suppression shorter fires.

Taking advantage of a long and wet spring/early summer, Forest officials managed a group of fires, which started July 28th and burned through late October, in an area identified by the Boise Forest Plan for ensuring fire fulfills ecological values, balanced with human use.



Known as the Little Beaver Complex, the 7,000 acres that burned during this lengthy period required active management such as the use of a burnout on one flank, checking the fires movement through light-on-the land fireline construction, and active public information to notify recreation and business users of the management actions and fire behavior.

In mid-August, a series of lightning fires occurred, starting with the Hurd Fire (1,380 acres) in the Cascade Ranger District. That was followed by over 50 lightning fires starting on August 26 that required the prioritization of suppression and management options which ranged from complete immediate suppression to light-on-the land longer term suppression options.

Developing strategies that considered current conditions, Forest Plan objectives, agency partner missions, and national direction was accomplished very effectively over an intense three week period.

"We ended the season with 89 fires that involved 11,450 acres," said Bob Shindelar, Boise Fire Management Officer. "For the 15 fires that started in the fire management area identified in the Forest Plan, we managed 3 of them for a longer period and quickly suppressed the others due to their location, and potential human and social impacts."

Since 1970 the 2.6 million acre Boise National Forest has had 1.3 million acres burned by wildfires, many of which burned under hot and dry conditions. "Taking advantage of good weather and moist fuel conditions helped develop a successful and balanced fire program this year," Shindelar added.

"With each new lightning caused wildfire we evaluate social, economic and resource factors," said Forest Supervisor Cecilia Seesholtz. "A key factor is firefighter and public safety balanced with the resources at risk."

Job Corps Students Learn Fire Fighting Skills For the First Time



Students from the Centennial Job Corps in Nampa, Idaho for the first time ever assisted the Boise National Forest in managing prescribed fires and wildfire incidents. Forest Service personnel provided the fire training to the students who clearly were very excited about learning a new skill.

In the spring, students dug fire line and helped ignite a 500 acre plus prescribed burn on the Emmett Ranger District. The goal of the prescribed burn was to reduce the buildup of dead woody ground fuel and break the "ladder fuel" that has developed over time. This work lowers the potential of a large intense wildfire in the future.

"This was a training opportunity for our students to experience live fire," said Luke Hays, GED Instructor at Centennial Job Corps, "It was an excellent opportunity for our students who wouldn't otherwise get this kind of experience."

During the summer, the Job Corps mobilized one hand crew to the Harris Wildfire Complex where students provided initial attack, fireline construction and mop-up duties on the 1200 plus acre wildfire eight miles east of Horseshoe Bend.



Governor Otter and Foreign Visitors Observe Fire Operations

Idaho Governor Butch Otter met with firefighters at the Hurd Fire camp to talk about the fire situation. He praised the interagency effort to provide structure protection to nearby Tamarack resort.

Other visitors during the incident included a group from Ethiopia who visited as part of a two-week cross-country US AID tour. They gathered ideas to help them enhance their country's disaster management organizations. Their government is also learning the ICS system for use with natural disasters.

In addition, two fire managers from Norway learned about ISuite software as a means to track personnel, and gather report costs associated with large incidents, and how an Incident Action Plan (IAP) is created.

John Kidd's Incident Management Team directed the incident and said all of the visitors got a first-hand look at how an incident management system is applied and used to support a fire incident. They left impressed with the organization and tactics used to battle a structure-threatening wildfire.



The ARRA Provided a Total of Nearly \$9 Million Dollars

The Boise National Forest successfully implemented several American Reinvestment and Recovery Act Projects (ARRA) that created or retained jobs and improved many facilities and roads used by the public each year. More than 99 percent of the funding received was obligated through contracts putting Idaho contractors to work and boosting the local economy.

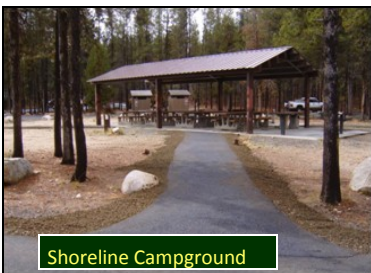
The ARRA provided a total of nearly \$9 million dollars to the Forest for implementation of projects that started in late summer of 2009 and continued during the summer of 2010.



Resurfacing Roads

The Forest specifically received \$4.8 million for road related projects. These projects enhanced the protection of anadromous fish habitat and improved public access to the National Forest.

Projects included resurfacing approximately 36 miles of road, repairing or replacing six bridges and maintaining an additional 400 miles of roads.



Shoreline Campground

Forest Supervisor Cecilia Seesholtz said that public access to recreational destinations is now safer and more enjoyable to forest visitors. One of the first completed projects improved the Shoreline Campground on the

Cascade Ranger District. Valley Paving and Asphalt from Cottonwood, Idaho was awarded this \$480,000 project to pave campground roads, walking paths and the parking lot. These improvements improved accessibility for those who are disabled and made the campground easier and more cost efficient to maintain.

The Forest received \$2.68 million for fuels reduction work in the Idaho City Ranger District with a planned treatment of about 1950 acres and an estimated 50 jobs produced. These projects were all within wildland urban interface areas and designed to reduce fuels that would facilitate successful suppression objectives and reduce the potential for uncharacteristic large wildfires.

In addition, they enhanced water flows in municipal watersheds, created local business opportunities and stimulated private infrastructure development for processing woody biomass.



Mores South Helicopter Project

The ARRA Mores South Helicopter Project funded at \$2.3 million was awarded to Columbia Helicopters to treat 1,300 acres of hazardous fuels. This project enabled Columbia Helicopters to keep its workers employed through the winter.

The company also hired local Idaho contractors maintain roads, construct a helicopter landing and drive log trucks. Local business owners in Idaho City noticed the infusion of workers and purchases in that community, which added further to the creation and retention of jobs.

Forest Partners Reach out to Immigrant Students to Experience Idaho's Great Outdoors

In 2010, the Boise National Forest staff developed a unique outreach program for students from the Boise Language Academy. In January, more than 200 recent immigrants to the U.S. participated in Snow School at Bogus Basin, thanks to a generous grant from REI.

Students come to the academy from across the globe including Mexico, Iraq, Thailand, Congo and Tanzania. For many this was their first experience with snow. They especially enjoyed constructing snow shelters, sliding down hills, following animal tracks, and experiencing the quiet and "warmth" inside an igloo.

"For the majority of students, their experience at Snow School is a highlight that will stick with them for years," said Edna Rey-Vizgirdas, a Boise NF Environmental Education Specialist. "In 2010, more than 1400 students from schools throughout the Treasure Valley participated in Snow School, which is an excellent partnership in our local area."

Snow School is a partnership between the Boise National Forest, REI, Bogus Basin, The Nordic Group, and Winter Wildlands Alliance.



Education Specialist
Edna Rey-Vizgirdas



Forest Hosts Kokanee Days



Idaho City Fish Biologist Devon Green

The Boise National Forest partnered with Trout Unlimited, Sierra Club, Idaho Rivers United, Be Outside Idaho and the Idaho City Chamber of Commerce to host the annual Kokanee Days in Idaho City. This free family event encourages outdoor fun and education.

The event features a five-stop road trip for people to see Kokanee salmon make their run up Mores Creek along State Highway 21 to spawn. It was an opportunity to enjoy wildlife, view raptors, pan for gold, plant a tree and see the springs that are used by the bottling company Rocks Water. The event is a fun family outing and helps stimulate the economy.

"Kokanee Salmon provides us with a showy symbol of what wildlife and clean water mean to our community; their fall run up Mores Creek spawned this event and gives us a reason to celebrate nature and an opportunity for our children to explore," said Pam Elkovich, Trout Unlimited Boise River Restoration Coordinator.

66 Years of Fire Prevention



Ellen Dunlap and her friend Smokey

Smokey Bear celebrated his 66th birthday with several hundred of his closest friends and fans August 8 at the Idaho Botanical Garden in Boise. Smokey's birthday was a free event for the public to come and meet the birthday bear himself, as well as enjoy cake and ice cream, music, fire education displays, crafts and games.

Acting Forest Fire Prevention Officer Ellen Dunlap said that Smokey's 65th birthday party was so much fun last year that everyone wanted to do it again. "So much of our fire prevention message is aimed at the young ones. From age 3 on, they are so receptive. Fire prevention can become second nature," said Dunlap.

This year's event attracted around 600 people making it a very successful birthday party. Other groups partnering for the event include the John William Jackson Fund, Treasure Valley Fire Prevention and Safety Co-op, and Meadow Gold.

Idaho School Children Partner with Lucky Peak Nursery

Elementary school teacher Susan Dransfield called the Lucky Peak Nursery last spring hoping for some bitterbrush seedlings her students could plant in the Boise foothills for wildlife habitat. What she got was an experience her students at Mary McPherson Elementary would never forget.



"I knew we could do more than just provide seedlings," said Assistant Nursery Manager John Sloan. "So I took it one step further and let the students grow their own seedlings to plant in the foothills."

Sloan introduced the project and taught the students how to plant the seedlings provided by the Forest Service and explained the nursery's role in reforesting our public lands to improve wildlife habitat. Sloan then asked Michael Young with Idaho Fish and Game to show the students how to plant the seedlings properly and explain the importance of the foothills habitat. Afterward, the students planted their seedlings completing their bitterbrush project.

The students went on a guided tour of Lucky Peak Nursery and the nature trail. They were very excited to see deer along their hike. "The Forest Service and Idaho Fish and Game have

really gone out of their way for us," said Dransfield. "With their support the project has turned into a wonderful experience for more than 135 students, so far."

Lucky Peak Nursery is located 10 northeast of Boise on the Boise National Forest and hosts tours for thousands of schoolchildren each year. The nursery often partners with Idaho Department of Fish and Game to help conduct programs.

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